

## Message Text

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15  
ACTION ITF-05

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SR-02 ORM-01 AID-05 FDRE-00 SSO-00 VO-03

SCA-01 INSE-00 EA-06 NSCE-00 /077 W  
----- 128874

R 011130Z MAY 75  
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2664

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 1378

EO 11652: GDS  
TAGS: SREF, VS, CE  
SUBJ: RESETTLEMENT OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

REF: STATE 97854

1. SUMMARY: CHARGE HAS MADE ORAL DEMARCHE ON PROPOSAL CONCERNING RESETTLEMENT OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES TO MID-LEVEL OF FOREIGN MINISTRY BUT IS STILL AWAITING APPOINTMENT WITH ACTING PRIME MINISTER. END SUMMARY.

2. CHARGE BEGAN SEEKING APPOINTMENT WITH ACTING PRIME MINISTER MAITHRIPALA SENANAYEKDD(MRS BANDARANAIKE IS AT COMMONWEALTH PRIME MINISTERS' CONFERENCE JAMAICA) AFTERNOON APRIL 28, FINALLY MAKING CONTACT WITH CHIEF OF PROTOCOL MORNING APRIL 29. "HIGHEST POSSIBLE LEVEL" AND "EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY" WERE STRESSED. CHIEF OF PROTOCOL SAID REQUEST SHULD BE PUT IN WRITING, ALONG WITH REFERENCE TO SUBJECT TO BE DISCUSSED. CHARGE AGAIN ASKED FOR EXPEDITIOUS HANDLING AND IMMEDIATELY SENT LETTER TO MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MDFA).

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3. AFTERNOON APRIL 29 CHIEF OF PROTOCOL ASKED CHARGE TO SEE MELVILLE FERNANDO, MDFA ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (EAST ASIA AND INDOCHINA), MORNING APRIL 30 TO DISCUSS MATTER. TO CHARGE'S REPETITION OF WORDING OF WASHINGTON INSTRUCTION, CHIEF OF PROTOCOL RESPONDED THAT DISCUSSION WITH MDFA OFFICIAL CONCERNED WAS PART OF "NEW PROCEDURES" AND DID NOT PREJUDICE SUBSEQUENT CALL ON ACTING PRIME MINISTER.

4. CHARGE MADE ORAL DEMARCH TO FERNANDO APRIL 30, EMPHATICIZING HUMANITARIAN ASPECTS OF CASE. FERNANDO SAID HE PERSONALLY SAW VERY LITTLE PROSPECT OF POSITIVE RESPONSE BUT HE WOULD PUT ISSUE UP TO HIGHER AUTHORITY. CHARGE ACKNOWLEDGED DIFFICULTIES GSL WOULD HAVE IN MATTER BUT ASKED THAT APPROACH BE CONSIDERED SERIOUSLY AND REPEATED REQUEST TO PRESENT QUESTION DIRECTLY TO ACTING PRIME MINISTER.

5. THIS IS FIRST TIME EMBASSY HAS HAD TO GO THROUGH ALL STEPS OF "NEW PROCEDURES". IN JULY 1974 MDFA SENT OUT TWO CIRCULAR NOTES TO DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS, ONE STATING PRIME MINISTER, OWING TO PRESSURE OF WORK, WOULD BE ABLE TO SEE ONLY CERTAIN CATEGORIES OF PERSONS, INCLUDING "HEADS OF FOREIGN MISSIONS IN SRI LANKA ON MATTERS OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE"; AND THE OTHER REQUIRING THAT APPOINTMENTS WITH PRIME MINISTER AND OTHER TOP GSL OFFICIALS BE OBTAINED ONLY THROUGH PROTOCOL DIVISION. ON FEBRUARY 26, 1975, MDFA SENT OUT ANOTHER CIRCULAR FURTHER LIMITING ACCESS TO PRIME MINISTER AND ADDING REQUEST THAT HEADS OF MISSIONS MEET IN FIRST INSTANCE WITH APPROPRIATE MDFA OFFICIALS BEFORE ASKING FOR APPOINTMENT WITH HER.

6. WE AND OTHER DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS GENERALLY ATTRIBUTE NEW PROCEDURES TO TWO FACTORS: FIRST, ABUSE OF ACCESS TO PRIME MINISTER ON PART OF SOME EMBASSIES, PARTICULARLY COMMUNIST REPRESENTATIVES; CONFIDENTIAL

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AND SECOND, EFFORT BY TISSA WIJEYERATNE, FORMER AMBASSADOR TO PARIS AND NOW ADDITIONAL SECRETARY IN MDFA, TO GAIN GREATER CONTROL OVER FOREIGN AFFAIRS OPERATIONS. WE HAVE SINCE JULY 1974 GONE THROUGH PROTOCOL DIVISION FOR AMBASSADOR'S REQUESTS TO SEE PRIME MINISTER, BUT OTHERWISE "NEW PROCEDURES" HAVE NOT AFFECTED HIS ACCESS TO HER.

7. IN PRESENT INSTANCE, THERE HAS BEEN NO  
FOLLOW-UP, FOR TODAY IS MAY DAY, WITH UNITED  
FRONT PARADE AND RALLY OCCUPYING ENTIRE ATTENTION  
OF ACTING PRIME MINISTER AND ALL OTHER CEYLONENSE  
POLITICIANS. FURTHER, REQUEST TO ACCEPT VIETNAMESE  
REFUGEES PRESENTS PROBLEMS FOR GSL ON BOTH ECONOMIC  
AND POLITICAL GROUNDS: AS ONE OF MSA'S IT  
WOULD NOT BE ABLE CARE FOR POOR REFUGEES, AND IT  
HAS, DESPITE BRAIN DRAIN, ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF TRAINED  
PROFESSIONALS; ON POLITICAL SIDE, IT LONG AGO  
RECOGNIZED PRG AND TODAY'S PRESS IS FULL OF  
CONGRATULATORY STATEMENTS ON "PRG VICTORY"  
(COLOMBO 1373 AND 1377). WE SHALL NEVERTHELESS PURSUE  
MATTER, FIRST TO DEMONSTRATE IMPORTANCE OF VIETNAMESE  
REFUGEE PROBLEM FOR INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, AND  
SECOND TO PLAY OUT ACCESS QUESTION IN LIGHT  
"NEW PROCEDURES" AND CURRENT SITUATION.  
BYRNE

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 01 MAY 1975  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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